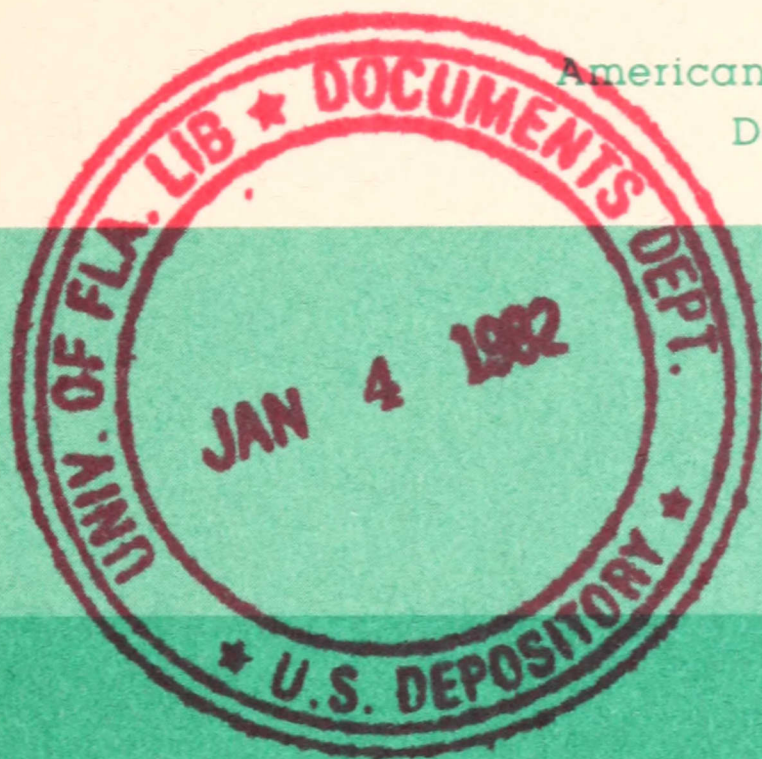


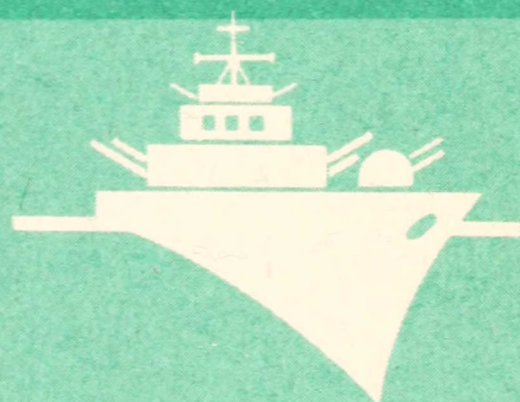
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A POCKET GUIDE TO

PANAMA



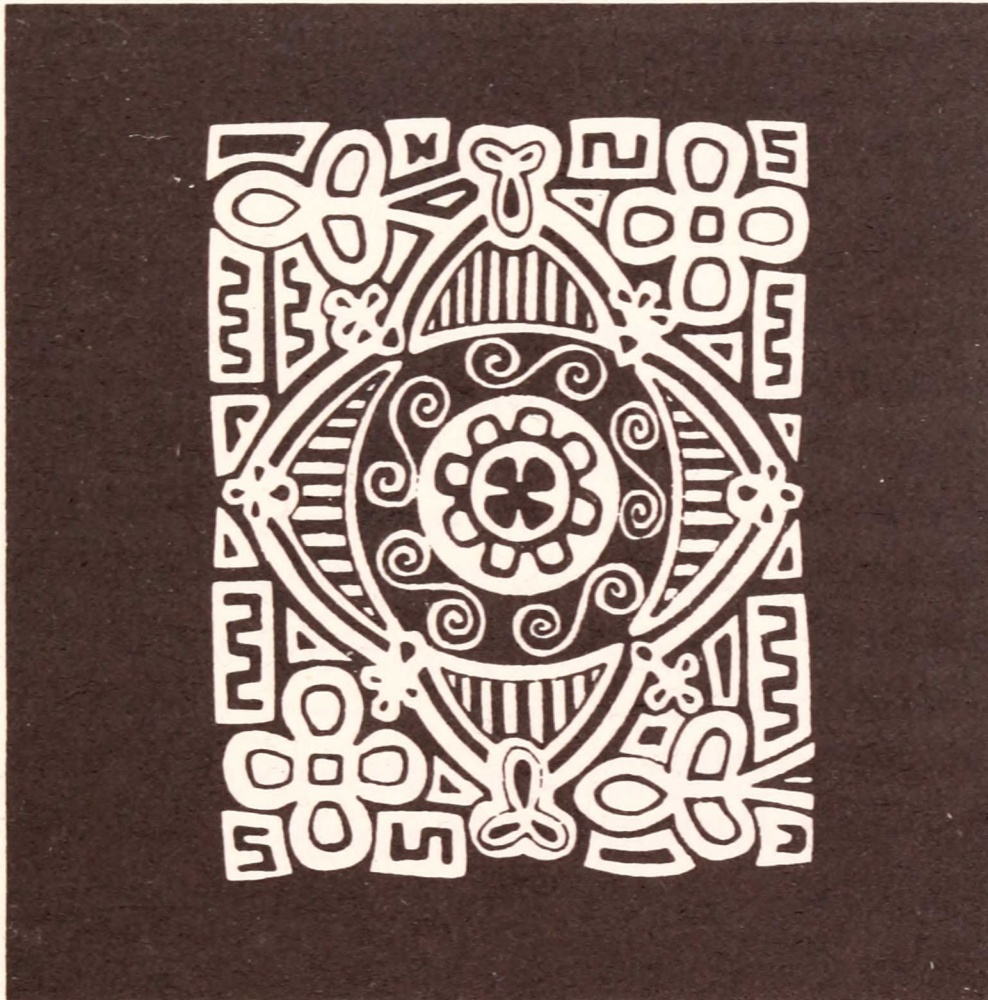
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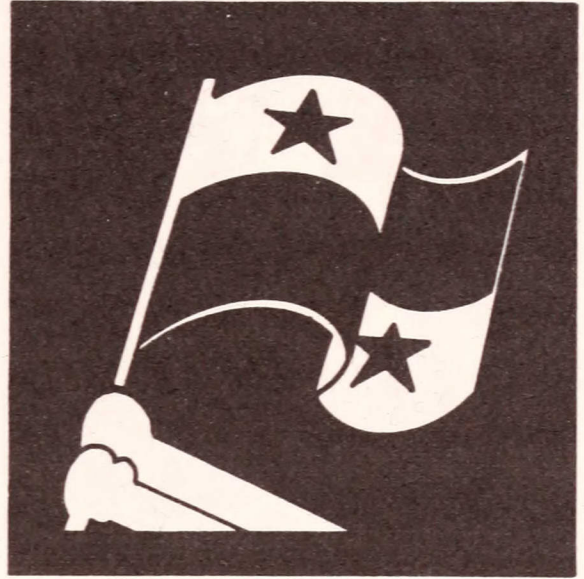
A POCKET GUIDE TO PANAMA



**AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • 1981**

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PANAMA-A PROFILE

Official Name: República de Panamá

Population: 1,900,000 (mestizo 70 percent; West Indian 14 percent; white 10 percent; Indian 6 percent)

Literacy Rate: 80 percent

Per Capita Income: \$1,300

Religion: Roman Catholic (93 percent), Protestant (6 percent)

Languages: Spanish (official), English

Currency: Balboa divided into 100 centesimos. U.S. and Panamanian coins under \$1 are interchangeable; otherwise, U.S. paper currency is the medium of exchange.

Flag: Four rectangles: Lower left, blue; upper right, red; upper left, white with blue star in center; lower right, white with red star in center.



BIENVENIDO

¡Bienvenido a Panamá, amigo!

Welcome to Panama, friend!

These are the words that you will hear wherever your travels take you during a tour of duty in this colorful and friendly Central American nation.

To help you in getting around and meeting the Panamanians, there is a brief Spanish language section in this booklet.

However, English is spoken in most of the larger cities of the country, and even in the outlying regions there is usually someone in the village or area who has worked with Americans or learned English at school.

Let's find out more about this land which will be your host.



THE LAND

The Republic of Panama occupies the southern end of the isthmus that forms the land connection between North and South America.

It is one of the smallest nations in the Americas, both in size—29,762 square miles (77,080 square kilometers)—and population, which is nearing the two million mark.

Shaped like a flattened letter “S,” the nation varies in width from 31½ miles to 133 miles and is divided by the Panama Canal, which runs between the Pacific ocean and the Caribbean Sea/Atlantic Ocean.

Almost 85 percent of the country is forested, and much of the southern (Darien) region, which borders on Colombia, is covered by a nearly impenetrable rain forest.

At the northern end of Panama, which borders on Costa Rica, there are green plains and low hills.

Much of the country is mountainous, and two mountain ranges form the backbone of the isthmus.

Rainfall is heaviest on the Atlantic Ocean side, as much as 130 inches a year. The Pacific Ocean side of the isthmus receives about one-half that amount of rain.

Panama's climate is pleasantly tropical, and temperatures are practically uniform the year around, ranging from 74 degrees to 91 degrees Fahrenheit.

High humidity makes it necessary to have some type of dehumidification process wherever clothing, books, or other such material are stored.

THE GOVERNMENT

The nation marks its independence from the government of Colombia on November 3, 1903. The present Constitution, adopted in October 1972, separates the government into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislative branch is made up of a National Assembly of Community Representatives whose 505 members are elected to six-year terms by universal adult suffrage.

The executive branch is headed by a President and a Vice President.

The judicial branch is organized under a nine-member Supreme Court.

The National Guard serves as both police and military force and has a strength of about 9,000 men and women, including small air and naval units.

¡Bienvenido a Panamá!



THE PEOPLE

Of the 60 or more tribes thought to have lived in the area that is now Panama before the first European sighted the land, three remain.

In Panama as elsewhere on the American continent, the native culture did not long survive the brutal shock of the Spanish conquest. It is estimated that over two-thirds of the Indian population died between 1519 and 1650.

Indian tribesmen who met the first European to set foot in Panama, Rodrigo de Bastidas in 1501, were for the most part friendly, given more to trading and farming than to warfare.

However, the sometimes cruel treatment they suffered at the hands of the various explorers and settlers soon changed that attitude.

Seafaring voyages as well as overland trips had acquainted the Panamanian Indians with the riches and lands of the Incas in Peru and the Mayans in Mexico.

As traders, they brought back gold and silver trinkets and chains. In some parts of the Panamanian isthmus, the Indians mastered the art of "lost wax" casting and made their own gold and silver *huacas*, statuettes of gods, goddesses, and animals.

In addition, their mastery of pottery-making was on a par with the more centralized Indian civilizations, such as the Aztecs and Incas.

But the intricate designs of the jewelry did not interest the Spaniards as much as the gold and silver from which they were fashioned. In Panama, as elsewhere, much of the cultural record of the area was lost when these historical artifacts were melted down into bars for easier shipment to Spain.

You can meet the descendants of some of these original tribes today if you travel to the Panamanian countryside and take a step back in time to visit their villages.

They are the Cunas of the San Blas islands and the coastal region of the Caribbean Sea, the Chocos living deep in the heart of rain forests in the Darien region (their ancestors aided Balboa in his search for the *Castilla del Oro*—Golden Castile), and the Guaymies, a hardy mountain tribal group which lived then, as now, in the Chiriqui region of the country.

From their trading journeys—by sea as well as over-

land—these Indians knew of the Pacific Ocean long before it was “discovered” by Spanish explorers. Without the help of the Chocos, Balboa would never have been able to claim the ocean and all the lands that it touched for the king of Spain.

In addition to the many cultural contributions the Indians made to the country, historians now believe that the very name—Panama—comes from an Indian phrase which means “the place where the fish are many.”



THE SPANISH

By late in the 15th century, Spain's kings had long dreamed of the riches of Cathay, based on Marco Polo's tales of his overland travels to the mysterious and little-known eastern kingdoms.

So it was that the pleas of Christopher Columbus—Cristóbal Colón in the Spanish language that he preferred to use—did not fall on deaf ears when he asked to be given ships and men in order to find the sea route to the Indies and beyond.

So certain was he that the route across the Atlantic Ocean would lead him to the riches of the East that he took along a Jewish wanderer who spoke some Arabic, Chaldean, and Hebrew in order to be able to speak to the great leaders of the Indies when he met them.

He sailed from Palos, Spain, on August 3, 1492, with a fleet consisting of the 133-foot-long Santa Maria and two much smaller ships, the Pinta and the Niña, both about 50-feet long.

Land was sighted on October 12. But it was not to be the Cathay that he was seeking. Instead, he landed on the coast of one islands of The Bahamas.

The first trip ended with the exploration of those islands. On his second trip, with a much larger fleet, he returned to the same islands for more explorations.

When he departed at the end of the second trip, he left behind ships and men. One of his captains, Rodrigo de Bastidas, later took his ship even further west. He eventually landed on the isthmus of what is now Panama in 1501 and established a small settlement, called Nombre de Dios, the first Western settlement in the New World.

The settlement did not remain for long. Disease and fear drove the settlers back to the ship.

But one of them, Vasco Nunez de Balboa, was fascinated with the land and the people, so much so that he took a Cuna Indian woman as his wife.

On his fourth trip to the New World, Columbus anchored in the harbor where the first settlement had been. He landed there and explored the entire eastern coastline of what is now Panama.

Balboa remained in the New World and eventually became a resident in the first permanent settlement in the new World at Acla. While the site of this settlement has

been lost over the centuries, historians now believe it was located near what is now the town of Careta.

It was while living at Acla that Balboa learned of the existence of another ocean across the mountains.

With Indian guides, he traveled through what is now the Darien region of Panama and first saw the Pacific Ocean on September 26, 1513.

He claimed it, and all the lands it touched, for the king of Spain and returned to Acla with gold that he had taken from the Indians of the region.

The gold was sent back to Spain, accompanied by an Indian who had been taught some Spanish and who could tell the king of the “immense rivers of gold” waiting for those who would seek them out. This was the *Castilla del Oro*—Golden Castile—that Spanish dreams were based on.

Balboa returned to the Pacific side with more Spaniards and explored the coastal waters. He landed on an island in the Gulf of Panama, naming it and those around it the Pearl Islands.

Intrigue among the Spaniards who envied his popularity led to the downfall and death of Balboa. This occurred after a governor appointed by the king arrived in 1514 to take charge of the colony's affairs.

The governor found the heat and disease of the Caribbean not to his taste, so he followed the Spanish trail across the isthmus to the cooler, healthier climate of the Pacific side.

In 1519 he moved the seat of government to the Pacific side and founded Panama City. This soon became the center for Spanish exploration and conquest in Central and South America.

The conquest of Peru by Francisco Pizarro in 1533 was planned and launched from Panama City, as was the expedition of Sebastian de Benalcazar, founder of Quito, Ecuador.

Led by the lure of gold and silver, Spanish soldiers and settlers roamed the entire Pacific coast of South America. Cruel at times in their search for treasure, they also intermarried with the Indians. The mixture of Spanish and Indian blood brought forth the mestizo population that is found in Panama and elsewhere in the Americas where Spain had colonies.

And Others

The treasures of the New World that were passing through the ports of Panama soon attracted other adventurers.

All the gold that was seized from the Incas crossed the isthmus on the backs of black slaves brought to the land from other Spanish possessions in the Caribbean. The silver of Bolivia crossed the same way, as did pearls from the Pacific when that area was opened to Spanish exploration after Magellan found a water way by sailing around the southern tip of the South American continent in 1520.

Those slaves who escaped added to the population of the colony. They fled into the interior of the isthmus.

Because of their raids against the treasure-carrying caravans headed for the Caribbean side of the isthmus, they were called *cimarrones*—wild men—by the Spaniards.

At times they joined up with the corsairs that were sailing in the waters on both sides of the isthmus. These were French and English trader-pirates who raided the Spanish fleets as well as the cities of the coast.

Panama City was burned to the ground in 1671 by the pirate Henry Morgan, and Sir Francis Drake captured and looted both Portobelo and Nombre de Dios on the Atlantic side.

The lure of the land and its riches tempted some of these adventurers to stay. And they were joined in their various endeavors by wanderers from Scotland (a Scottish colony was founded on the coast of Darien in 1699), England, and France.

Seeing the beauty of the land, enjoying the tropical climate and friendliness of the Panamanians, these men joined those already settled.

The cosmopolitan nature of today's Panamanians grew with each and every settler.

ROAD TO FREEDOM

The decline of Panama as a point of transshipment began in the late 1730s after the signing of a peace treaty between England and Spain. With English raiders no longer capturing Spain's ships, the traffic of the galleons from Portobelo began to fall off as the vessels which left Peru favored the route around Cape Horn.

For a period Panama had its own governor, but when the post was abolished in 1751, Panama became a quiet backwater region, isolated by land and sea from New Granada where the new governor resided.

Through the many revolts that the Latin American colonies mounted against Spanish rule, Panama remained on the side of the Spanish king. Then, in 1821, the people of the region proclaimed their independence and voluntarily associated themselves with the newly independent nation of Colombia.

But, this also did not last. Colombian misrule brought about no less than 53 Panamanian revolts between 1850 and 1902.

Finally, on November 3, 1903, Panama declared its independence from Colombia after the Colombian government had rejected a treaty that would have permitted the United States to build a canal across the isthmus.

The United States was the first country to recognize Panamanian independence. The two countries signed the Panama Canal Treaty soon after independence.

A Dream Fulfilled

The United States had been seriously interested in an isthmian canal for at least a half century before the actual signing of the canal treaty.

But long before the United States or even the French became interested in building a canal, the possibility of a canal had been studied. In 1524, Charles V of Spain ordered such a study to be made.

While the effort was too great for the engineers of that day, the dream did not die.

The passion for gold—this time in California—led to the revival of the idea in the 1840s and 50s when east coast miners made their way to Panama by ship, crossed on foot and mule back, and took a second ship to California and the promised land.

While the idea of a canal simmered, the construction of a railroad across the isthmus began in mid-1850. From Colón, named for Columbus, the railroad edged its way across the countryside. Some days little or no progress was made in the swamps it had to cross, but on January 27, 1855, the last rail was laid and the next morning a steady stream of passengers started crossing back and forth with ease.

In 1880 a private French company, led by Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal, started work on a canal across Panama. This effort ended in 1898 after 18 years of work, \$280 million in costs, and thousands of deaths from yellow fever and other tropical diseases.

With the signing of a canal treaty between Panama and the United States, the military took an active part in all phases of building the Panama Canal.

U.S. Army Colonel William Gorgas was placed in charge of sanitation and health in the Canal Zone, and his program of drainage, spraying, and sewage systems eliminated the peril of yellow fever before construction started in earnest in 1907.

Another Army officer, Colonel George Goethals, was appointed to the post of chief engineer of the Canal Commission, and work that had formerly been done by civilian engineers was reorganized and directed by Army engineers under Colonel Goethals.

The United States' plan for the canal was relatively simple in concept. The steps were to:

- dam the Chagres River to create a man-made lake through which would be dredged a channel,
- construct a harbor on the Atlantic side and dredge a sea-level channel from the harbor to the dam,
- build a set of locks in the dam to raise and lower ships from sea level to the lake, a distance of 85 feet,
- excavate a ditch at the other end of the lake through the mountains of the Continental divide, and
- build locks to lower and raise ships to a dredged channel and harbor on the Pacific side.

The monumental project was completed in ten years at a cost of \$387 million.



TREATIES—OLD AND NEW

In 1903 the United States and the newly independent Republic of Panama signed a treaty giving the U.S. not only the right to build a canal but also the right to exercise jurisdiction, as if sovereign, over a 10-mile-wide strip across the nation.

The jurisdiction was in perpetuity—forever—and the strip of land became the Panama Canal Zone.

In return, the United States gave Panama an initial payment of \$10 million plus \$250,000 annual rent and guaranteed Panama's independence.

Historically, many Panamanians were dissatisfied with the 1903 treaty. Over the years it was amended—in 1936 and again in 1955—but the dissatisfaction remained. In 1964, a long and complicated renegotiation process started.

Two new treaties were arrived at and were signed on September 7, 1977.

One is the basic treaty governing the operation and defense of the Canal which extends through December 31, 1999. The other guarantees the permanent neutrality of the canal.

These treaties were approved by the Panamanian people in October 1977 and ratified by the United States Senate in March and April 1978. When the new treaties became effective on October 1, 1979, the Canal Zone ceased to exist and the territory was turned over to the Republic of Panama.

In brief, the new treaties provide that the United States will have responsibility for the operation of the Canal throughout the remainder of this century. It will have access to land and water areas and facilities needed for the operation of the Canal during that period.

The Panama Canal Commission, created by the treaties to operate the Canal, is a U.S. government agency supervised by a board composed of five American and four Panamanian members. The new Commission replaces the Panama Canal Company. According to the treaties, Panamanian participation in the operation and defense of the Canal will increase throughout the treaty period until the year 2000 when Panama will assume full responsibility for the Canal.

When the treaties came into effect on October 1, 1979, the Canal Zone disappeared and Panama assumed juris-

diction of the former Zone. U.S. military bases in Panama on that date came under a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

The United States retains criminal jurisdiction over its nationals working for the Commission for the first 30 months of the treaty, or until April 1, 1982. After that date, Panama will exercise primary criminal jurisdiction with the understanding that as a matter of policy it generally will waive jurisdiction to the United States. U.S. citizen employees and their dependents charged with crimes will be entitled to procedural guarantees and will be permitted to serve any sentence in the United States.

In addition, U.S. citizen employees of the Commission will enjoy rights and protections similar to those extended to U.S. government employees elsewhere abroad.

The Status Of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

Military personnel stationed in the Republic of Panama are subject to three sets of laws:

- the Uniform Code of Military Justice,
- United States Federal law, and
- Panamanian laws.

United States citizen dependents are subject to two legal systems:

- United States Federal law, and
- Panamanian laws.

Article IV of the SOFA provides that the United States has the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over members

of the U.S. Forces, members of the civilian component, and dependents of these individuals, who commit offenses on Defense Sites, in Military Areas of Coordination, Canal Operating Areas, and Areas of Civil Coordination for Housing.

Additionally, the United States has the primary right to exercise jurisdiction for offenses committed in the civilian community when:

- the offense is against the United States' security (sabotage, espionage, or treason).
- the offense is solely against the person or property of a member of the Forces, the civilian component, or a dependent of these individuals, or
- if the offense arises out of an act or omission done in the performance of official duty.

The Republic of Panama has the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over all other offenses committed within the Republic of Panama. Personnel who violate Panamanian law may be arrested by the *Guardia Nacional* and tried in Panamanian courts.

Under the SOFA, the United States authorities are entitled to the custody of U.S. Forces members or dependents who commit offenses in the Republic of Panama, with five exceptions. These are in cases where the individual is charged with:

- murder,
- rape,
- robbery with violence,

- trafficking in drugs, and
- crimes against the security of Panama.

In these instances, the individual will remain in the custody of Panamanian authorities, and if in U.S. custody will be transferred upon request to Panamanian custody.

It is important that U.S. Forces members or dependents identify themselves to Panamanian authorities, since these authorities have agreed to notify U.S. authorities when members of the U.S. Forces or dependents are detained. The notification permits U.S. authorities to request custody of the detained person.

Three areas of offenses can cause major problems for U.S. Force members, members of the civilian component, and the dependents of these individuals. They are:

—**drug offenses.** The Republic of Panama has strict laws on the possession and/or use of illegal drugs, including marijuana. Conviction for the use, possession, and trafficking in drugs can bring a maximum sentence of eight years in prison,

—**disrespect to a Panamanian official.** Disrespect includes a broad range of actions, such as walking away from and ignoring a member of the *Guardia Nacional* when he is addressing you, answering him in a loud or belligerent manner, or striking, abusing, or appearing to strike or abuse a member of the *Guardia Nacional*, and

—**traffic incidents.** Individuals stopped for traffic offenses should be aware that the *Guardia Nacional* officer will

take the driver's license of the offender at the time he issues the citation. The license will be returned after an appearance in court and the payment of any fine. Individuals involved in a traffic accident should never leave the scene of the accident without authorization.



YOUR HOSTS—THE PANAMANIANIANS

In your travels around the Republic of Panama to visit its different and colorful regions you will notice one thing—there is no racial discrimination anywhere in the nation even though its population is made up of a wide variety of races.

Except for the native Indians, the culture, customs, and language of the Panamanians are basically Caribbean Spanish, part of the heritage that the early explorers and settlers left behind. The great majority of the people, about 70 percent, is mestizo—mixed Spanish, Indian, and West Indian Negro.

In the cities you will find small separate communities of different races that have remained relatively unmixed. These include East Indians and Chinese whose ancestors worked on both the French and the American canals. There

are also small communities of descendants of Africans who were brought into the country by the Spanish to serve as slaves in transporting the gold and silver across the isthmus for shipment to Spain.

Then, there are the colorful native Indians of Panama.

These are the Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands and region, the Chocos of the Darien region, and the Guaymies. Each tribe still maintains its distinctive identity, traditions, and language.

Spanish is the official language of the country, although English is a common second language, especially in the cities and ports that are located at both ends of the Canal.

This mixture of cultures, customs, and peoples over the centuries makes the country one of the most interesting to visit in the Americas.

When you start meeting Panamanians and other Latins socially and at your work, keep in mind that the Latin personality includes a lot of personal dignity. The Latins are proud and individualistic.

They won't be hurried in their tasks, but the work, when it is finished, will usually be of high quality.

Because of the tropical climate of the country, most Panamanians dress casually.

But when it's fiesta time, out come the elaborate national costumes. For the women dancing the *tamborito* or *cumbia*, the national dances of Panama, it will be either a *pollera*—a dress made of light, white fabric with many petticoats and an "off-the-shoulder" look—or the *mon-*

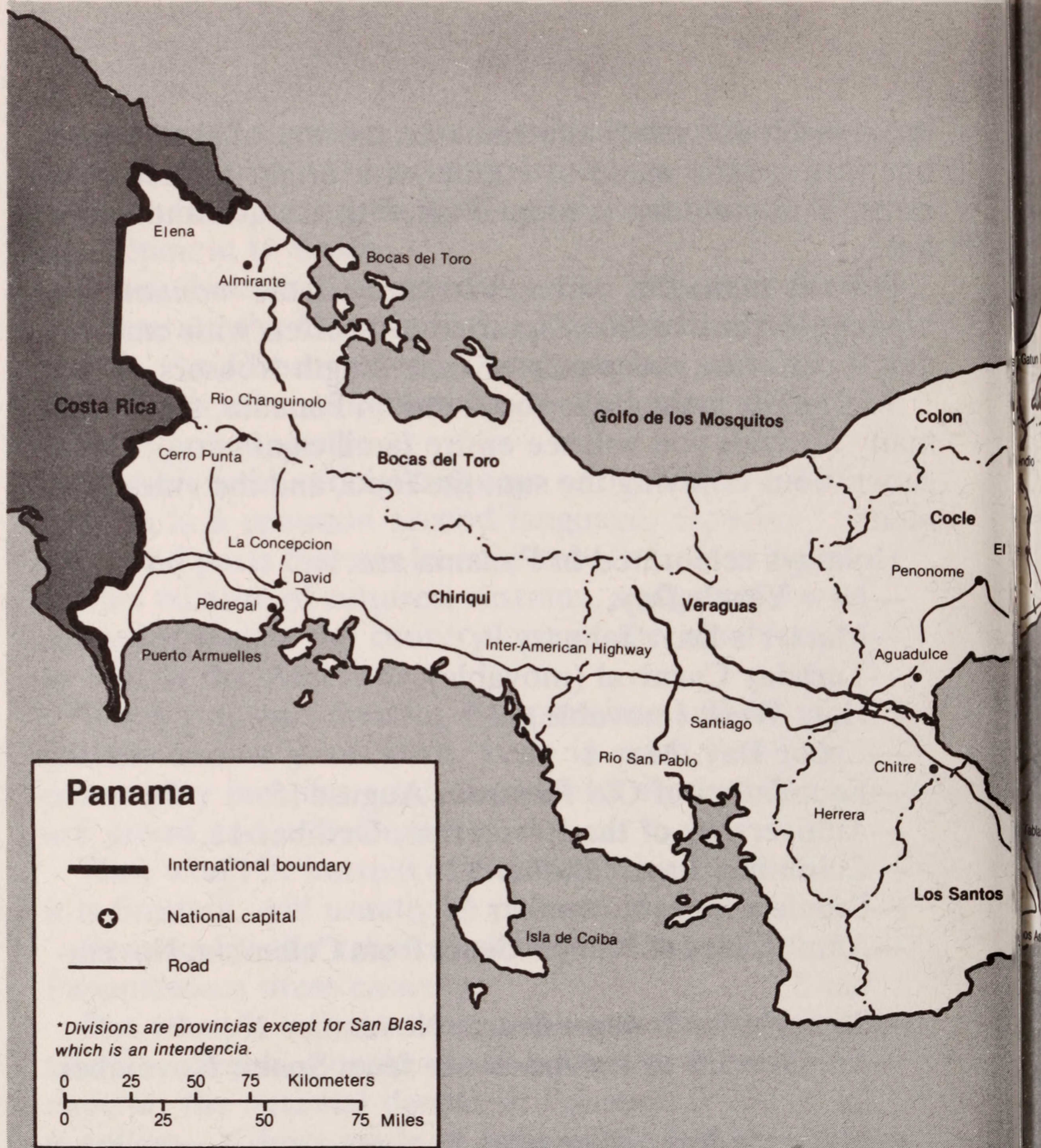
tuna—a blouse much the same as the top of the *pollera* but with a skirt made of cotton with bright printed patterns. The *montuna* is topped off with a black and white hat.

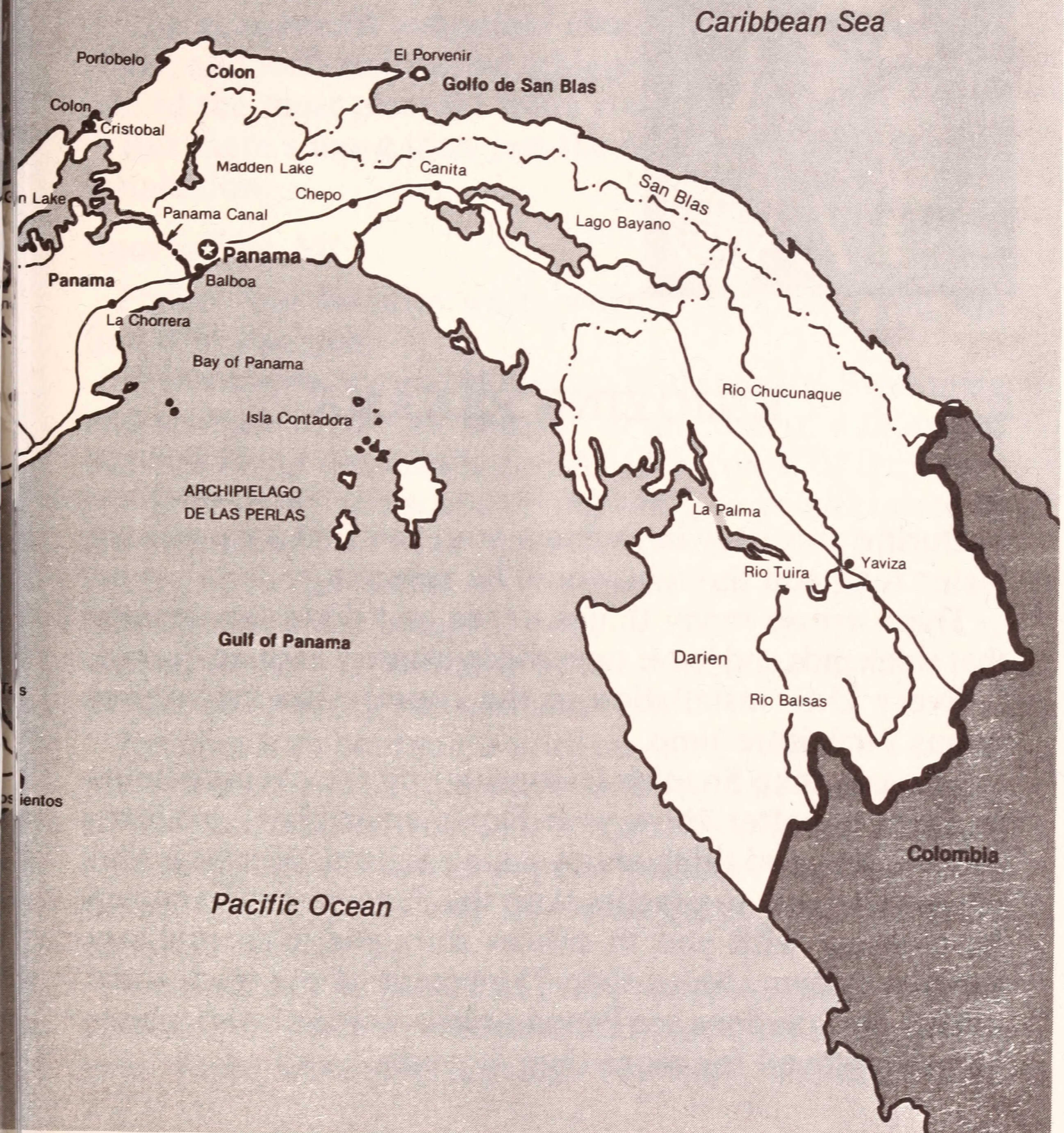
For the men, the national costume is the *montuno*—a hip-length shirt of homespun cotton, often with embroidered patterns, and a pair of knee-length trousers.

The family is the basic social unit in Panama, and at the many festivals you will see entire families of two or three generations enjoying the sun, the food, and the entertainment.

Holidays celebrated in Panama are:

- New Year's Day,
- Martyr's Day, January 9,
- Tuesday Carnival (movable),
- Holy Week (movable),
- Labor Day, May 1
- Foundation of Old Panama, August 15,
- Anniversary of the Revolution, October 11,
- Columbus Day, October 12,
- People's Day, November 2,
- Anniversary of Independence from Colombia, November 3,
- Struggle for Independence, November 10,
- Anniversary of Independence from Spain, November 28,
- Mother's Day, December 8,
- Christmas Day







ENJOYING PANAMA

During your stay in Panama you may find time passing faster than you thought would be possible.

There are so many things to see and do in the country that weekends and leave time will be eagerly awaited events.

Every U.S. installation in the country has active programs for leisure time.

You can take Spanish lessons during the evening hours in order to better know your Panamanian hosts and hostesses. One good thing about taking Spanish lessons is that you will be able to practice with the Panamanians who will be working with you in offices throughout the military support system. More than 75 percent of the work force at U.S. installations are Panamanians, some of whom have been employed for more than 40 years.

Panama is a sports paradise, whether you are a fan or a player.

The year-round temperate climate, long hours of sunshine, and well-maintained athletic facilities can make this one of the most pleasant tours you have ever had.

But there's more than just the facilities at your base or installation.

Sports For All

Name your favorite warm-weather sport and you will find it in Panama.

Water sports abound in this tropical country. Swimming and sunbathing can be enjoyed at any one of a thousand beaches along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of the country. Snorkeling and scuba diving will give you a chance to get acquainted with the hundreds of varieties of fish that are found in the waters off the coasts and at inland lakes. Surfing along the coasts is popular, and boating—sail as well as power—is available at the American installations as well as at every Panamanian resort.

Panama is an old Indian word meaning "the place where the fish are many." That was true when only Indians lived in the area and is true today. Lake fishing for peacock bass along the Canal is a popular pastime, but for the big thrills, rent a guide and an ocean-going boat for some deep-sea fishing.

Baseball can be played at every level. At the American installations there are leagues that play 12 months of the year. From December through February, national teams

play seven days a week. Professional golf at its best can be seen in February when the Panama Golf Club's Open attracts outstanding international players.

Tennis is a popular sport. There are courts at every U.S. installation.

There's also boxing on weekends, soccer—called "Fut" in Latin America—basketball, and horse races.

For those with an eye to something new, cockfights take the spotlight every Sunday and Monday at the Club Galístico de Panama. The rules have been modified and it's no longer a fight to the finish for these feathered warriors.

Eating Out

In every city of any size in Panama you will find that your choice of meals in the restaurants reflects both the mingling of the many cultures over the centuries in the country and the wealth of oceans that lap against the Pacific and Atlantic shores.

While there are many mixtures, there are also dishes that are native to the country itself and reflect its proud heritage.

A favorite among the Panamanians, is the appetizer *ceviche* (seh-vee-chee). Small, delicate, bite-size pieces of the flavorful corbina, a native fish, are marinated in lime juices and then served.

You might want a steaming bowl of a meal-in-one for most Panamanians, *sancocho* (san-ko-cho), a thick chicken soup.

Another favorite filler for everyone who tries it is a *carimañola*, (carie-man-yola), a yucca puff filled with tender Panamanian beef.

Native rice with its own delicate flavor, as well as all types of vegetables, complement any meal. Another favorite is *patacone* (pah-tah-koh-nee), fried green plantain.

Other native dishes are *gallo pinto* (gal-yo pin-to), sort of a stew with meat, rice, and beans; *sopa de marisco* (so-pa deh ma-risko), shellfish soup; and *guacho de almejas* (wah-cho deh al-may-hoss), rice and clams.

The riches of the seas provide food for every Panamanian and visitor.

The restaurants serve lobsters large enough to feed two diners, giant shrimp, clams and oysters, squid, eel, and food fish of every variety.

Or, if you decide on beef, you can feed to your fill on steaks of all types, since beef raising is an important part of the country's agricultural scene.

But these native dishes are only the tip of the eating-out iceberg.

Because the country has been host to so many different foreign visitors over the centuries, some welcome, some not so welcome, there are restaurants to tempt every taste.

Colombia, which once ruled the country, and Costa Rica, a neighbor, have contributed to the fine meals that are served in the larger cities. Spain's cooking secrets have not been lost either. Chinese restaurants have sprung up throughout Panama, many owned and operated by de-

scendants of the laborers brought to work on the Canal.

Whatever the meal, you may wish to complement it with one of the fine local beers.

For dessert, any one of the locally grown fruits—bananas, pineapples, oranges, mangoes—and then a cup of the country's famous Panamanian coffee.

Tipping is expected in restaurants. The service will be the best you have ever experienced, so 15 percent of the bill is not too large a tip to leave for your waiter or waitress.

Indian Cultures

No trip to Panama would be complete without a visit to any one or all three of the remaining Indian tribes that were native to the region.

Though they are Panamanians, these Indians live in their own regions, follow their own tribal laws, and use their own language. Civilization for most of them lasts only for a few hours when they visit one of the nation's cities to trade their handicrafts for food and modern conveniences.

The most primitive of the Panamanian Indians are the Chocos, who reside in the Darien region of the country. They live today in very much the same fashion as they did when Balboa first met them as he crossed the isthmus 450 years ago to discover the Pacific from his celebrated "peak in Darien." Today missionaries are working with representatives of the central government to bring these native Panamanians into the mainstream of the nation.

Tours to the Choco Indian tribal regions can be booked at Panama City.

Of the three Indian tribes, the Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands and coastal region are the most highly organized and economically active. The women of the tribe have maintained the customs and culture more than the men. Whether on the islands, on the mainland, or in the largest city of the country, the Cuna women wear their appliqued *mola* blouse, gold rings, a long skirt, red and yellow beaded headdress, and gold ornaments at neck, arm, and ankle. The *molos* that the Cuna women make are a distinctive art form in reverse applique work. A matching pair of *molos*—the front and back of a blouse—may take up to 50 hours to make, but the elaborate designs can take up to a year. They have become popular as collectors' items not only in the Americas but also throughout Europe.

Tours to the San Blas Islands and other regions of the Cuna Indians can be booked through travel agencies in Panama City as well as other cities of the country.

The largest tribal grouping, the Guaymi Indians, live in the area between the Panama-Costa Rica border and the Veraguas region. This is the Chiriqui section of the country known for its cattle, cowboys, horse breeding, coffee plantations, and farms. The Guaymi Indians are the most assimilated of the three groups but have still managed to hold on to their own culture and customs. Elaborate beaded necklaces—*chaquira*—are worn by the men of the tribe, along with matching arm and ankle bands.

The easiest place to meet the Guaymi is at Tole, just

off the Pan-American Highway where from time to time they set up small stands along the roadway to sell *chaquira*.

The Canal

Since U.S. Forces are assigned in Panama to support and defend the Panama Canal, your first sight to see should be the Canal itself.

The basic facts of the Canal are easy to state.

It is 52 miles (82 kilometers) in length and runs from north to south through Panama.

The Canal consists of two short sea-level sections at each end, three pairs of locks that lift ships to 85 feet above sea level, and a 32-mile elevated section that cuts through the Continental Divide and includes Gatun Lake and the famous Gaillard Cut.

A trip through the Canal shortens the voyage from either coast of the United States to the other coast by about 8,000 nautical miles.

Each ship that transits the Canal pays a toll based on its displacement tonnage. The average is about \$21,500 a ship and some 15,000 vessels pass through the Canal each year. The highest toll paid was for the Queen Elizabeth II which paid \$89,154.62; the smallest toll ever paid was the \$0.36 charged Richard Halliburton when he swam the entire length of the Canal in 1928.

Each ship that transits the locks uses some 52,000,000 gallons of water.

What is difficult to state and appreciate is the human

suffering and hard work that went into the construction of the Canal between 1903, when the Americans started work, and August 1914, when the first ship passed through from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Your installation library will have many books on how the Canal was constructed and how it operates. But, for a close-up view of the skill of the workers and the thoroughness of those military personnel and civilians who planned for today's Canal in the early 20th century, take a free tour of the facility.

While there are many other sights to see in Panama, this could be well the high point of your tour.

Carnival Time

Panama's four-day carnival just before Lent is the nation's time to let go.

In every city and village there will be parades, dances, floats, fireworks, and sports contests of every description.

This is the time to eat, drink, and make merry before the Lenten season starts.

Coronation balls for local carnival queens are social events in every locality. These start the festivities on Friday and Saturday. Sunday is *pollera* day when women dress in their finest native wear. Monday is the day for street dancing, and Tuesday is the day for the floats.

At dawn on Ash Wednesday, the country returns to normal after four days of fun and festivity.

Every village, every town, and every section of a larger city will have fiestas for their patron saints.

More to See

But there are many other things to see and do in Panama.

While the listing below is not complete, it will give you some idea of the variety of the countryside and the cultural background of the people.

Panama City is really three cities. There is Old Panama that Morgan the pirate burned but which still lives today in the ruins of a church and other buildings about six miles from the center of the new city. There is Colonial Panama with its narrow streets, iron lace balconies, Church of the Golden Altar, the National Theater, and the French Plaza.

Then there is Modern Panama with its fabulous shopping, hotels, casinos, and exciting nightlife.

Panama City is also the capital of the nation, the seat of government, and has four internationally acclaimed museums where the cultural history of the nation and its people can be studied at your leisure.

Out in the Gulf of Panama are the fabulous Perlas (Pearl) Islands of the Spaniards. The pearls are long gone, but the beauty remains. A 15-minute flight from the city takes you to Contadora where a multimillion dollar tourist complex makes living easy as you enjoy the beaches, fishing, and just sunbathing.

A different type of life awaits you when you visit Taboga Island, an hour away by launch from the bustle of the city. Here is a paradise for those tired of the horns and pollution

of the automobile age. There are no cars on the island, but there are beaches, water-skiing, swimming, and relaxation.

On the Atlantic side is the centuries-old port city of Colón and the port of Cristóbal, both named after Christopher Columbus.

Shops with goods from every country in the world line the streets of these cities. And after the shopping, there are restaurants and bars that have been greeting visitors for over 100 years.

When on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus, a visit to the historic Fort San Lorenzo, guarding the mouth of the Chagres River, is a must. The ruins of Portobelo also abound with history of the Spanish quest for gold and offer marvelous scuba diving in the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean.

Only a short distance from either of those two cities is the home of the Cuna Indians. Some live in the coastal areas, but a short flight, or a launch trip, will take you to any of the hundreds of San Blas islands. There you can bargain for a *mola*, enjoy a lobster lunch, or just watch the blue water lap on the white sandy shores.

Further afield you might want to drive over to David, capital of the Chiriquí Province, to enjoy the green cool highlands of that area. Here is where you will find orange groves, cattle and horse ranches, coffee plantations, and mountain streams where the trout are unbelievably large.

This area is also the home of the Guaymí Indians who

sell their handicraft in most of the cities and along the roadways.

Darien Province, the least-populated of all the parts of the country, is the home of the Choco Indians. The hunting is fine and varied, but to visit this area you will need a guide. Your best bet is to take one of the tours that are offered. Then, if you like the isolation and quiet, make arrangements to return on your own with a good Indian guide.

These are only highlights of what Panama offers.

Don't lose a moment after getting settled into your job and your home to start enjoying your host nation of Panama.



DAILY LIVING

Stepping off an aircraft into Panama is like arriving at any city in the Sun Belt of the United States.

The weather will be warm, ranging from 74 degrees to 91 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season—this means at least one shower a day—is from April until December. After you get settled into your home or quarters you will find that it will be necessary to have some sort of drying equipment in closets.

During the dry season, the trade winds blow steadily, and the humidity is much lower.

Money

The monetary unit of Panama is the *Balboa*, a coin,

which is divided into 100 centesimos. Panamanian coins and U.S. coins are the same size, weight, and are used interchangeably. For paper currency, the U.S. dollar circulates freely throughout the country.

Pets

If you decide to ship the family pet to Panama at your expense, you will need to ship with the pet a current health certificate, current rabies vaccination, and a copy of your orders to indicate where you can be reached. All pets entering Panama must be quarantined for 30 days at the owner's expense. The quarantine station is operated by the U.S. Army in Corozal. Before shipping a pet, check with your Transportation Management Office for information on any restrictions.

Electricity

Electric current in Panama is the same as in the United States, and all appliances will work properly.

Your Car

All military and civilian personnel assigned to Panama are authorized the shipment of one privately-owned vehicle at government expense. The importation of a second vehicle—except in the case of a joint spouse assignment, when both members have a POV shipment privilege—will result in payment of vehicle import taxes which are very expensive.

Local Transportation

Getting around without a vehicle is not difficult but can be expensive. Taxis with meters are plentiful. Installation buses provide transportation between the sometimes widely separated parts of the U.S. complex, and bicycles can be purchased at the exchange.

On the economy, in addition to the taxis, there is an efficient bus system which covers not only the cities but continues on to serve many of the villages of the country.

Air transportation is widely used to visit the outlying regions and is a must if you want to see the Cuna Indians on San Blas Islands or enjoy the beaches of the Contadora resort in the Gulf of Panama.

National Guard

If you become involved in an accident or violation of the law off base, or if you need help, you will come in contact with Panama's National Guard, or *Guardia Nacional*. These men and women are Panama's combined police and armed forces.

They are respected by the local population and will not look kindly upon any challenge to their authority.

If you need directions or assistance, ask any member of the National Guard. If he or she does not wear the "tourista" patch which indicates they can speak a foreign language, they will have access to a telephone to contact someone who can speak English.

If you should happen to come in contact with the Na-

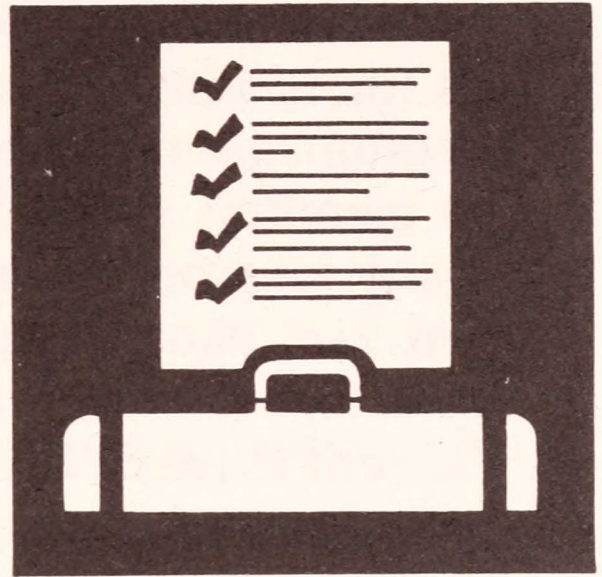
tional Guard in their law enforcement capacity and are taken into custody, remain calm and courteous.

Under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which became effective on October 1, 1979, the *Guardia Nacional* is to report any arrest of U.S. military personnel or their dependents to the military police of the nearest U.S. installation.

The SOFA does not protect you from prosecution for a crime. It does, however, guarantee you certain rights.

Drugs are illegal in any form anywhere in Panama. There is a "guilt by association" clause in Panama's laws which means that if you are found by the police in a car, room, or other place where drugs are present you may be apprehended and may be prosecuted.

Military members may not wear the uniform off-base or outside of the Panama Canal operating areas on personal business. If a member of the *Guardia* sees you shopping or banking or doing other personal business outside of the permitted areas, you may be taken into custody.



GETTING READY TO GO

Going on a tour of duty in a foreign country is no different than getting ready for any other change of station. It takes a little more preparation, but if you start early, you should have no difficulty.

The following checklist will help you gather together all of the documents and items that you should have in your possession before starting on your foreign tour.

Checklist

Personal Items

- ☐ Passport—one for the sponsor and one for each family member
- ☐ Military identification cards for every family member

- ☐ Permanent change of station orders—at least three copies for sponsor and each family member
- ☐ Immunization record—complete record for every family member, plus copies of other vital health records. If any member of the family needs special health care, that fact should be reported to your Service health authorities as soon as PCS orders are received.
- ☐ Current driver's license for every adult member
- ☐ School records for each child, including last report cards
- ☐ Birth certificates for all members; adoption papers (if any)
- ☐ Marriage certificate(s); divorce/annulment decree(s)
- ☐ Power of attorney, if needed
- ☐ Copy of current will and letter of instruction
- ☐ Copies of prescriptions for every family member
- ☐ Naturalization document(s), if any
- ☐ Uniforms, civilian clothing as required

POV, Household

- ☐ Vehicle title, registration
- ☐ Extra set of car keys
- ☐ Insurance policies on POV, household goods, family members
- ☐ Inventory of household goods being shipped

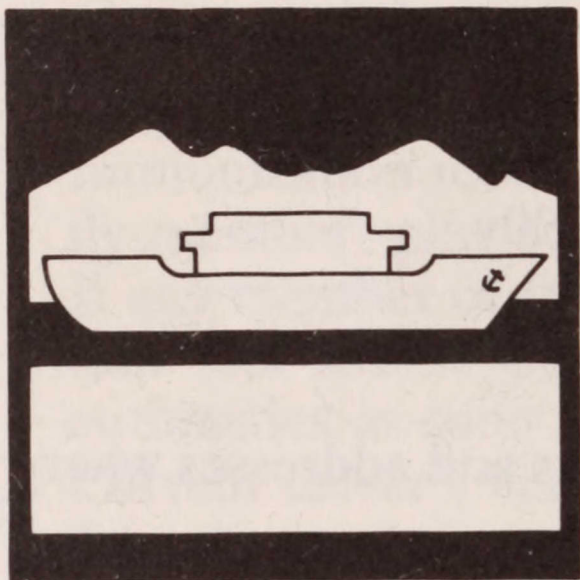
For Travel

- ☐ Overnight toilet articles, including toilet paper
- ☐ Portable radio, battery operated

- ☐ Traveler's checks, other forms of funds
- ☐ U.S. bank checkbook, extra checks
- ☐ Portcall instructions
- ☐ One-cup heating element, 110/230v
- ☐ Alarm clock, windup model

Other Items

- ☐ Credit cards, with list of numbers and addresses where to report loss
- ☐ List of companies due payment from you, with addresses
- ☐ Safe deposit box key, with list of items in box
- ☐ Previous discharge certificates, if any
- ☐ High school, college records
- ☐ Information from the installation veterinarian office if pet is to be shipped



YOUR ROLE IN PANAMA

Your role as a *Norteamericano* in Panama is an easy one—to make friends among the Panamanians so that the relations between our countries remain at the high level of goodwill they have enjoyed since 1903.

Your Panamanian friends and co-workers have seen thousands of Americans come and go over the years the people of both countries have worked together.

If you can add just a few more pleasant memories to those already held by Panamanians, your role will have been accomplished.

Have a pleasant stay in one of the Americas' most fascinating countries.



SPANISH LANGUAGE GUIDE

Spanish is an easy language to learn, even if you have not already studied it in school. The grammar is a bit complicated and rigid, compared to English, but you can learn a lot by ear if you practice the language and listen to people speak.

GREETINGS AND GENERAL PHRASES

English	Spanish	Pronunciation
Hello!	¡Hola!	¡OH-lah!
Good morning/good day	<i>Buenos dias</i>	BWEN-ohz DEE-ahss
Good afternoon	<i>Buenas tardes</i>	BWEN-ahss TAR-DESS
Good evening/good night	<i>Buenas noches</i>	BWEN-ahss NO-chess

English

How are you?

I am well

Sir/Mister

Madam/Mrs.

Miss

Please

Excuse me

Thank you

You are welcome

How much

costs

this?

Yes

No

Spanish*¿Como está usted?**Estoy bien**Señor**Señora**Señorita**Por favor**Dispénseme**Gracias**No hay de qué**¿Cuánto**cuesta**esto?**Si**No***Pronunciation**¿KOH-moh ess-
TAH oo-STED?

ess-TOY bi-EN

sen-YOR

sen-YO-rah

sen-yo-REE-tah

por fah-VOR

dees-PEN-say-may

GRAHSS-yahss

NOH AH-ee day

KAY

¿KWAHN-toh

KWESS-tah

ESS-toh?

SEE

NOH

DAYS OF THE WEEK**English**

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Spanish*domingo**lunes**martes**miércoles**jueves**viernes**sábado***Pronunciation**

doh-MEEN-go

LOO-ness

MAR-tess

mee-EHR-koh-less

HWEH-vess

vee-EHR-ness

SAH-bah-doh

NUMBERS**English**

One

Two

Three

Four

Spanish*uno**dos**tres**cuatro***Pronunciation**

OO-no

DOHSS

TRESS

KWAH-troh

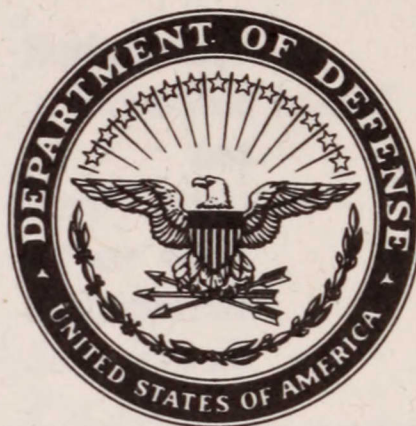
English	Spanish	Pronunciation
Five	<i>cinco</i>	SEEN-koh
Six	<i>seis</i>	SAY-eess
Seven	<i>siete</i>	see-EH-tay
Eight	<i>ocho</i>	OH-choh
Nine	<i>nueve</i>	NWEV-ay
Ten	<i>diez</i>	dee-EHSS

SIGNS FREQUENTLY SEEN

Spanish	English
<i>Abierto</i>	Open
<i>Alto</i>	Stop
<i>Cerrado</i>	Closed
<i>Conserve su derecha</i>	Keep to the right
<i>Cruce</i>	Crossroad
<i>Despacio</i>	Go slow
<i>Desvío</i>	Detour
<i>Entrada</i>	Entrance
<i>No hay paso</i>	No thoroughfare
<i>Peligro</i>	Danger
<i>Prohibida la entrada</i>	No entrance/Keep out
<i>Prohibido el estacionamiento</i>	No parking
<i>Prohibido fumar</i>	No smoking
<i>Salida</i>	Exit
<i>Señoras/Mujeres/Damas</i>	Women
<i>Señores/Hombres/Caballeros</i>	Men

Weights And Measures

<i>Un centímetro</i> (sen-TEE-meh-tro).....	0.39 inch
<i>Un metro</i> (MEH-tro).....	1.1 yards or 39.37 inches
<i>Un kilómetro</i> (kee-LO-meh-tro).....	0.62 mile
<i>Un gramo</i> (GRAH-mo)	0.035 ounce
<i>Un kilo</i> (KEE-lo).....	2.2 pounds
<i>Un litro</i> (LEE-tro).....	1.06 quarts



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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